

Hide and seek sub-gaming with Shaun Southern

Written by dreamkatcha. Any related videos, as always, can be found on my YouTube channel.

None of this would have been possible without the fantastic resources generously provided by immensely talented emulator authors, and communities such as Hall of Light, Lemon Amiga, Lemon 64, World of Spectrum, Moby Games, World of Longplays and Recorded Amiga Games. Thank you for your tireless dedication to preserving the history of gaming.

As scintillating as it may be, just so there's no misunderstanding, this isn't an article about a mislaid demo version of Silent Service. No, what we'll be looking at here is gaming offshoots squirrelled away deep within the code of the game you *thought* you were getting. You know, the one relating to the name on the box?

These tend to be accessed much like cheat modes, and exist I suppose because gamers love nothing more than unearthing out of the blue Easter eggs... well except for discovering whole bonus games that is - the ultimate egg of the Easterly variety.

On the flip side, developers like to include them because they get a kick out of the buzz they generate. They extend the shelf life of games, foster goodwill and free publicity. Everyone's a winner, baby, that's the truth!

"Hidden bonuses promote experimentation with a product. They quite simply provide value for money." -
Chris Sorrell

Often they're included as a tribute to an especially admired game, a hat tip towards a developer's gaming heritage if you like.

The usual rules of Easter egg burial tend to fly out the window when it comes to hidden games. They're not a record-correcting signature in an uncredited game. Unless an original creation, they don't apply a personal stamp to a rigidly commissioned product. Typically fairly limited in scope and technical prowess, it would be a stretch to interpret them as vanity, or even an inside joke. They're a different breed entirely.

I take it you'll be wanting some examples then. Luckily, you've come to the right place.



Scrape just below the surface of Legacy, an unreleased platformy shooter from Hexodus, and you'll find two mini-game classics, Taito's Space Invaders and Tetris by Russian mathematician, Alexey Pajitnov. Enter 'gibson' or 'marshall' as passwords respectively to access them.



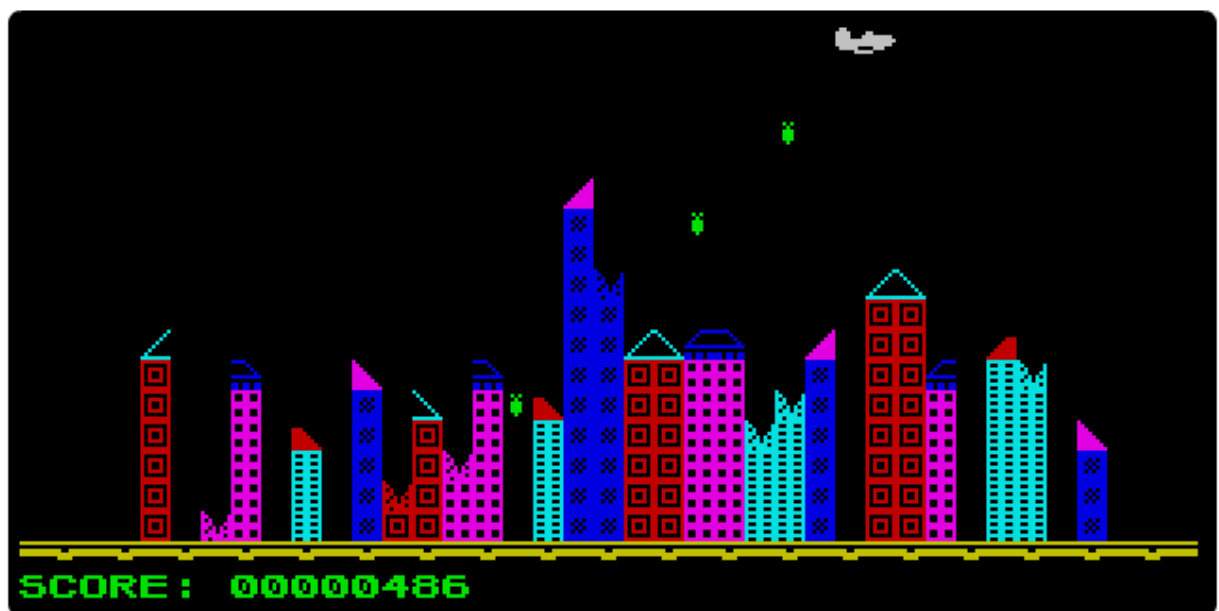
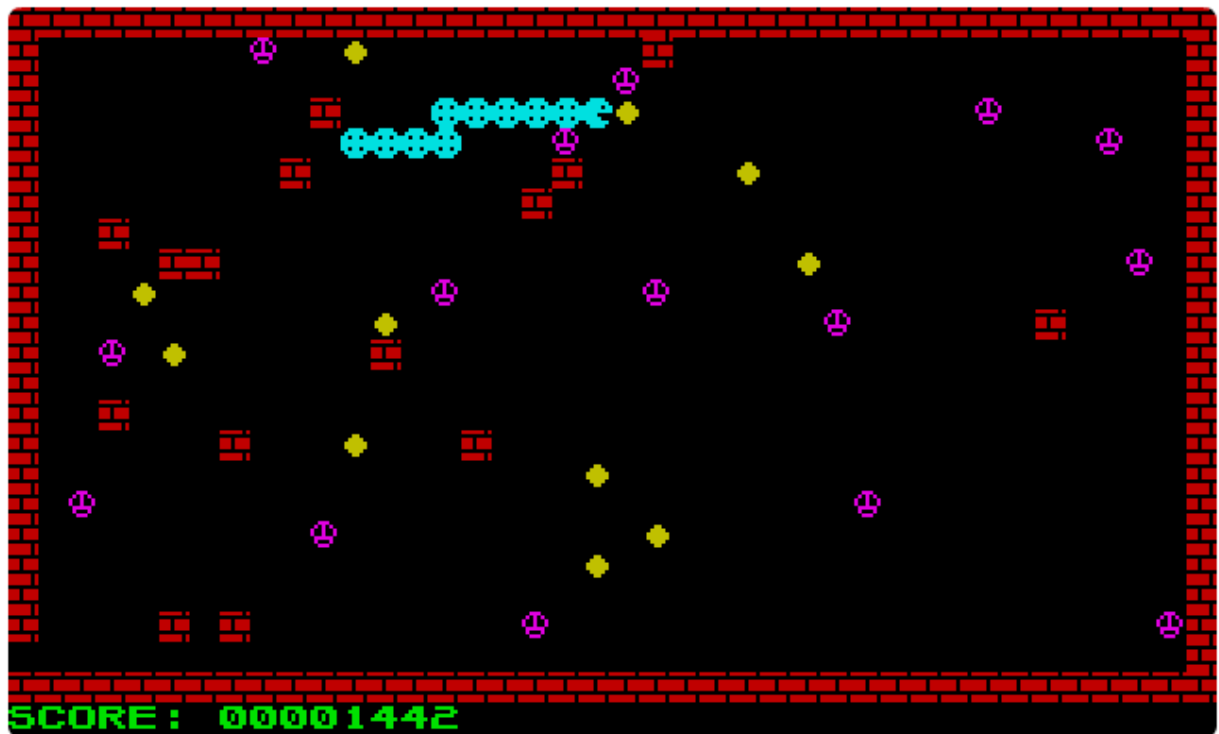
Hexodus comprised coder, Jason Heggie, and artist, Shadligh Dale. Jason was in charge of the C64 version of Dalek Attack, another title harbouring an interesting Easter egg.

In the PC and Amiga edition, you can access a hidden room behind some blocks wherein the names of the development staff can be found. This came to pass as a backlash to the BBC's wish for only the team as a whole to be credited.



Comic book platformer, Judge Dredd from Random Access (and coded/illustrated by Steve '*Snake*' Palmer), also contains a mini-game double-whammy in the form of Bomber (a clone of Blitz for the VIC-20, itself based on Air Attack for the Commodore PET) and Snake.

These are played via the DOS-based Justice Central computer by running their names as commands within the 'games' directory (remember when folders were known as directories?).



Certain versions of Team 17's 'Gauntlet in space' Alien Breed top-down shooter includes the arcade classic, Pong. It can be selected from the space station's computer 'Intex' terminal, which is engaged using the space bar.

SORRY

**INTEX ENTERTAINMENT
SUB SYSTEM INACCESSABLE**

UNIT UNDER REFURBISHMENT

**INTEX SUPER SPACE FROG
INSTALLED EARLY
NEXT MILLENIA**

This isn't one of them.



Try this one instead.



A non-rotatey Asteroids - I mean 'Rox' - can be played inside Gremlin's Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge if you enter 'monster' for player one's name, and 'seventeen' for player two.



To play 'Dux' - a clone of the 1980 SEGA coin-op, Carnival - in Gremlin's Lotus Turbo Esprit Challenge II, type in the game's name as a password.

The sub-game with an Atari 2600 aesthetic can also be found on CU Amiga cover disk 35 (June 1992).

Possibly the game was chosen for inclusion due to a superficial connection to the publisher, Gremlin Industries, an arcade game manufacturer that operated in San Diego, California between 1973 and 1984. The outfit merged with SEGA in 1979, though succumbed to the almighty video games crash in 1983.

Dux being a remake of Shaun Southern's Carnival-inspired Kwazy Kwaks for the VIC-20, or Duck Shoot having been renamed when ported to the C64, is probably also relevant here. ;)



Gremlin's Lotus Turbo Esprit Challenge III includes a remake of Shaun Southern's 1987 Commodore 64 game, POD aka Proof of Destruction.

Whilst published by Gremlin, the Lotus games were actually developed by Magnetic Fields, founded by Shaun Southern and Andrew Morris.

As with the prequel, the hidden gem can be conjured up via the password system. Enter 'cu amiga' for the Amiga version and 'pod please' in the Mega Drive port.

Referring to the music that overlays the secret bonus game, composer Barry Leitch comments, "The completion music was the Top Gear Title Music in the SNES and I remixed it for Top Gear Rally on the N64, but never used it".

In the same game, if you listen carefully during the title sequence you can hear the order "you will not copy this game". Interesting approach to copyright protection!

"The infamous one with the subliminal speech. The Speech says 'you will not copy this game', we originally

had a bit of speech that said 'You must kill mommy and daddy' but we didn't have the balls to leave that in the game..." - **Composer, Barry Leitch**



Is that a knock at the door? Well whad'ya know, it's only Lotus, Super Cars and Kid Chaos coding maestro, Shaun Southern. I bet *he* could tell us a thing or two about hidden sub-games!

Q. Firstly, could you tell me how the Lotus series came to include so many hidden extras? Were they your idea, and was it done with Gremlin's approval?

A. I may have some of the details wrong here, it was a long time ago!

One of the first games I 'wrote', on the Vic 20 I think, was a clone of Carnival the arcade game. I used to go to the arcades in Rhyl and watch the machine and copy down what the characters looked like. I then did this game for the Commodore 64 (released as Kwazy Kwaks I think, oh dear), and it was very easy to put onto the Amiga, but it didn't have enough depth for a full release, so we put it in as a bonus game.

Ditto with 'Rox', it was just something I was playing with which my friends and I liked playing, you just had to see how long you could last up to a maximum of 99 seconds. To be honest, my favourite type of game, quick and 'twitchy'.

Pod was again a full game on the C64 and C16, but was a bit lightweight for an Amiga release, and there wasn't really a £1.99 market for the Amiga, and partly because everyone expected a mini-game now, we put it in.

Q. Some of the selections are clearly a tribute to your back catalogue, but I'm struggling to draw any parallels between yourself and Asteroids. Is there one other than a loose connection to AD Infinitum?

A. There was a part of Ad Infinitum which was very like Rox. It was itself based on Astro Blaster, which was also an arcade game I used to play around 1983.

Q. Do any of your other titles feature hidden games?

A. Not that I can think of, only the Lotus games on the Amiga.

Q. Was it a good idea with hindsight? Were there any unexpected results?

A. I don't think it caused any problems. The games were fun and completely different to the Lotus games. Not sure if we'd be able to do that sort of thing these days though...

Q. How did people find out about them? Did you tip off the magazines as a PR exercise?

A. I think we may have told the magazines about them, but people also hacked into the code and found out themselves. Worth doing if the magazine gives you £10 for the 'tip'.

Q. Have you ever got into hot water for hiding something in a game without permission?

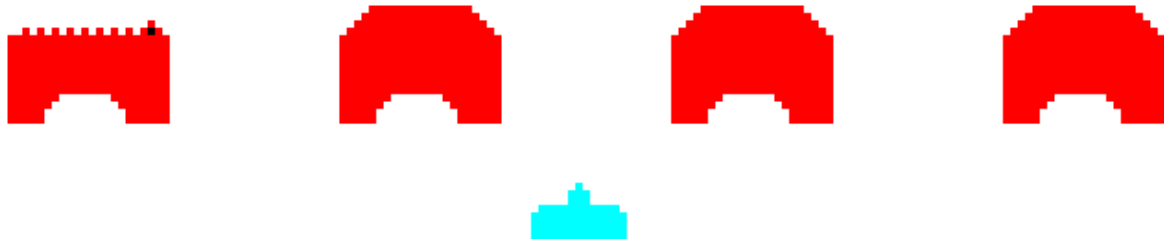
A. No, but there was the famous example of a sample which was put into the Lotus 2 game theme tunes. It was a very quiet 'subliminal sample' which said "You will not copy this game". You couldn't hear it under the music, but who knows, it may have worked as the game sold very well!

What an unexpected pleasure. Thanks very much for dropping in, Shaun. You're welcome back any time. :D



Enter 'pong' as a password into one of the computers in Code Monkey's Mean Streets and you're treated to a fantastic, arcade-perfect conversion of Mortal Kombat. Only kidding, it's a hidden Pong clone. You'd already guessed hadn't you.

I've made the executive decision not to include a picture of Pong on account of it being Pong. You know what that looks like I'm sure.



Poultry flight simulator, Astro Chicken: The Mindless Video Game can be launched from within Sierra's Space Quest III (aside from being a stand-alone demo that was used to promote the main game).

To embrace this once in a lifetime experience, enter the 'Monolith Burger' fast food joint and insert a coin into the arcade machine.



Vector Grafix stoked the flames of controversy when they injected a hidden sub-game called Astra Attack into their 3D strategy offering, Killing Cloud.

It allows you to deploy a party pack of morally dubious interrogation torture techniques to extract information from tight-lipped suspects. Following pressure from Amnesty International, Robert Maxwell arranged for the sideshow to be censored. Jack Bauer was reported to be gutted - it was his favourite game.



Core's sci-fi adventure game, Universe, plays host to the 'Arcades of Wheelworld' where you can have a dabble with a version of Space Invaders, the game that caused a shortage of 100 Yen coins in Japan upon its release in 1978.



What do you get if you take Williams Electronics' Defender and surgically remove the people-rescuing element?

Underkill, that's what - a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up sub-game found in Black Magic's Gloom.

Actually it's a clone of Overkill, itself based on Defender. You'll find a console screen on which to play the game located in various stages throughout the first person shooter. It can be tapped to earn extra lives, or progress to the next level.

Joining the dots, Mark Sibly, Gloom's coder, was also responsible for creating a shareware version of Defender for Acid Software, as well as working on Overkill for Vision.



The Croatian Galaga style game, Brod, features a hidden pinball bonus game.



If you get stuck in Lucasart's Day Of The Tentacle, you might like to step back in time and have a go at its prequel, Maniac Mansion.

The early point and click adventure game (the first to use the SCUMM engine) is activated via Weird Ed Edison's Commodore 64, and is included in its entirety.

You'll be glad to know the (not so) mini sub-games also features in the recent HD revamp of Day of the Tentacle, though sadly that aspect of the remake hasn't been lavished with the same hi-res treatment.



To establish the coordinates of your spaceship's stolen parts in Gilbert: Escape from Drill - those you need to evacuate the planet and sign your next TV presenting contract - you can play a cluster of arcade sub-games (via actual coin-op cabinets no less). The titles on offer are Brain Drain, Sprout Wars, Greed, Snot Fight, and a space invaders rip-off called Earth Invaders.

All very gamey, though not so much sub or hidden as they form the bulk of your raison d'etre. Does breaking established Easter egg defining protocol make me a scurrilous outlaw I wonder.



George Allan's Switchblade II includes a clandestine spherical platformer that can be mobilised by typing 'chrome' on the title screen. It bears a striking resemblance to Venus the Flytrap, also coded by George Allan.

Chrome actually began life as a demo routine that was polished into a playable game and submitted to Gremlin as a job-hunting manoeuvre. Obviously they were impressed and gave him a contract.

Determined to find its own voice, the shiny one was later featured as a stand-alone game on the June 1992 CU Amiga cover disk.



Typing 'cheat' on the title screen of Dynamite Dux from Activision, followed by 'nude' allows you to spar with the

boxing sub game.



If you type 'Dizzy' into the high score table when playing the Oliver Twins' 1991 NES Apache sim, FireHawk, you can summon a demo of The Fantastic Adventures of Dizzy.

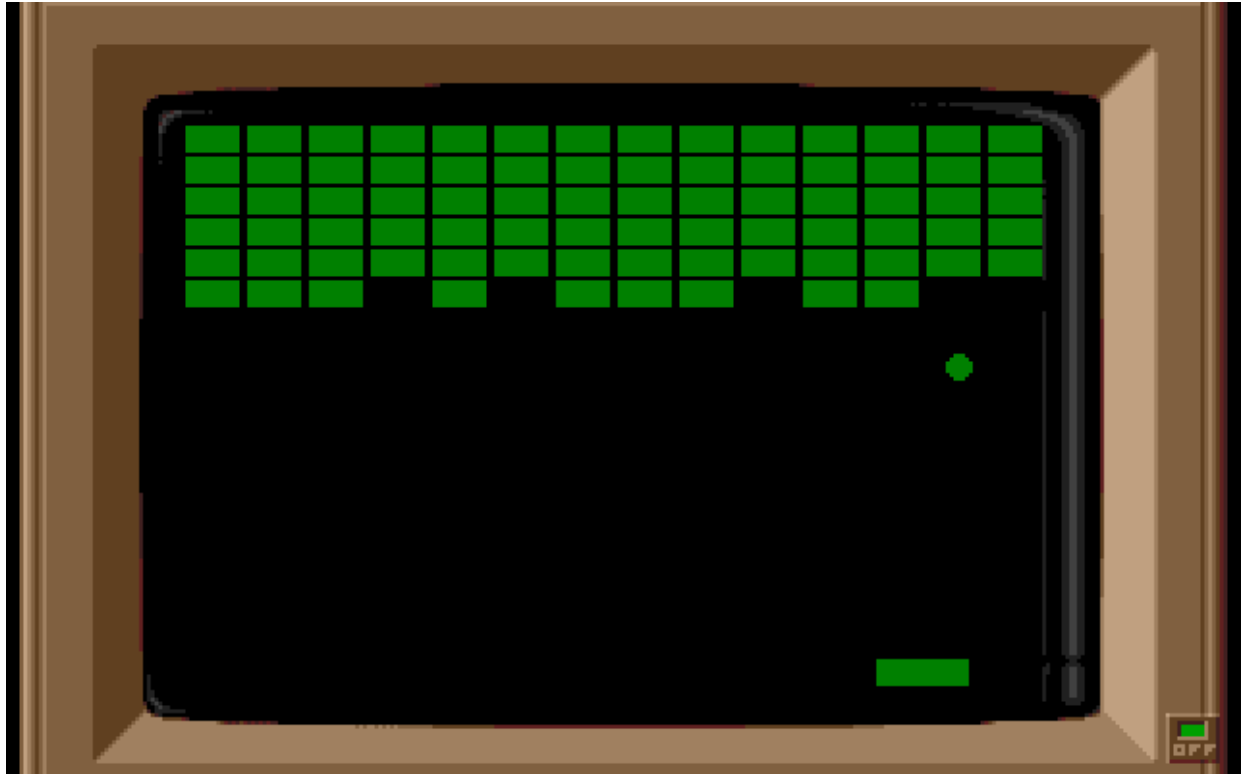


In the point and click adventure, Crime City by Interactive Fantasy Fiction, you can toy with a very primitive rendition of Atari's 1976 coin-op, breakout, on the green screen office computer.



Not so much *hidden* as you can select the option from the main menu. More interesting, however, is the original game's provenance; the concept was devised by Nolan Bushnell and

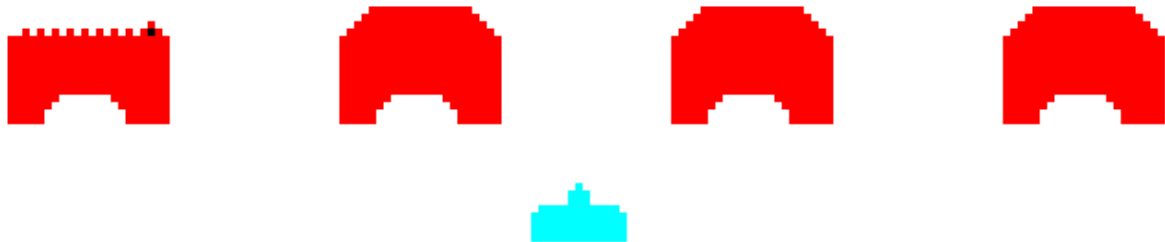
Steve Bristow, and built by two other Steves you may have heard of - Wozniak and Jobs. It was designed with the intention to create a single-player version of Pong.



Enter 'bibbib' as a password in Brain Bug's Lollypop and you can get your mitts on the 'Candy Hill' handheld LCD game.



Shareware game, Tanx 'n' Stuff, features a built-in hidden Pong clone. To invoke it, pause the game and hit the 't' key.



The Zool sized piano in some game or other - it'll come back to me I'm sure - can be hopped on to play a certain sequence of notes that will whisk you off to a secret shmup level. The keys are colour coded so try: dark red, yellow, red, orange, green.



Hidden game fans can rejoice in the knowledge that these unseasonal Christmas crackers never fell out of fashion.

Some more recent highlights include...

If you can complete the version of Plants vs Zombies nestled inside World of Warcraft you're rewarded with a sunflower as a non-combat pet. How about that for an incentive?

Call of Duty: Blacks Ops includes the text adventure, Zork. It can be executed through the CIA computer, in addition to the twin sticks shooter, Dead Ops Arcade.

Project Gotham Racing 2 is an elaborate, surreptitious delivery mechanism for the twin sticks shooter, Geometry Wars. It was so well received following development as a joypad testing tool, the side game was spun off into its own XBLA franchise.

Did I miss any of your favourites? I wouldn't stand for it!